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Lucia A Keegan 12/18/2006 03:04:14 PM From DB/Inbox: Lucia A Keegan

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ACTION: UNESCO  
INFO: POL ECON AMBU AMB AMBO DCM SCI

DISSEMINATION: UNESCOX  
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APPROVED: AMB:LVOLIVER  
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INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1729

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FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

E.O. 12958: DECL 12/14/2016  
TAGS: [SCUL](#) [UNESCO](#) [BR](#)  
SUBJECT: USUNESCO - BRASILIA OFFICE UPDATE

- ¶1. (U) Classified by USUNESCO DCM Andrew Koss, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).
- ¶2. (C) During a meeting on 6 December by Mission Political Assistant with Mrs. Lamia Salman-el Madini, Director of UNESCO's Bureau of Field Coordination, the subject of the Brasilia field office was raised, as she had just returned from a trip to Brazil earlier in the week.
- ¶3. (C) Mrs. Salman said that the Human Resources division will soon be re-advertising the posting for the Director of the Brasilia office, as no candidate had been selected from the previous announcement. (Note: the Brazilian government earlier vetoed an American candidate who had been short-listed for the position. End note).
- ¶4. (C) Salman said that based on her conversations, and from her meetings with personnel in Brasilia, she believes that they understand that things will be different in the future. She is also confident that the recent Executive Board decisions on reorientation had triggered change, and noted that new tools were being put into place to ensure that UNESCO roles and regulations would be followed.
- ¶5. (C) (Background note: Beginning in 1998, and with a major increase in 2003, the Brazilian Ministry of Health by-passed government hiring restrictions by contracting with UNESCO and UNDP to provide employees for programs for Brazil's Ministry of Health, an activity that is outside UNESCO's mandate. The sums involved were large and have made up at least one-third of UNESCO's global extra budgetary funding resources. The Ministry of Health has grown dependent on the cost-effective hiring system which keeps employees off their permanent roster. End background).
- ¶6. (C) Regarding the Ministry of Health, Salman said that 70 percent of the Ministry's professional staff is being supplied through the UN (UNESCO and UNDP). She mentioned that the office

that handles all of the social security cards for the country is staffed with UN personnel. According to Salman, the key problem now is finding an exit strategy for the Ministry of Health - which is proving difficult. At this point, she said that there is no solution at hand, and there have been no decisions taken by the Ministry of Health to resolve their reliance on UN personnel.

¶17. (C) Salman also mentioned that the amount of money UNESCO receives from the 3-5 percent overhead charged to the Brazilian government for providing services continues to increase. She said that there could be an additional 19 million dollars for resource-poor UNESCO.

¶18. (C) When Political Assistant suggested that the fear of media exposure could possibly prompt some action by the Brazilians, Salman said that she doubted it, noting that the Brazilian newspapers are filled with nothing but corruption scandals.

¶19. (C) As for UNESCO's image, she said that the "reorientation" of the Brazil office, as charged by the Executive Board is moving forward. The impression Salman left was that with the negligent former director out, a new personnel search underway, new rules and regulations reinforced, and training for field office personnel now being completed, that there is at least a little more breathing room for UNESCO's Secretariat before they are called to task before the Executive Board this coming spring.

¶10. (C) Comment: How quickly UNESCO's Director General will move to shut off the flow of millions into his cash-poor organization is another question, as the Ministry of Health continues to rely on UN personnel in Brazil. The 19 million dollars is also a huge temptation for cash-poor UNESCO, but that may make UNESCO reluctant to take immediate steps to end the program.

¶11. (C) Comment continued: While the Director General, as a result of conversations with the Ambassador and A/S Silverberg's letter of November 2006, is keenly aware of the USG's deep concern about the Brasilia office, and has said that he will personally monitor the External Auditors investigation in response to the current state of affairs. We recently heard that he told the new Canadian ambassador that the situation is delicate and that he feels caught between the United States and Brazil. The US Mission to UNESCO will, of course, continue to closely monitor the situation. End comment.

OLIVER